

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- December 14, 1998

CONTACT: Colin Crowell

(202).225-2836

Markey Letter to the NEI Regarding NEI Ads

Mr. Joe Colvin
President
Nuclear Energy Institute
1776 I Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. Colvin;

Recently the National Advertising Division of the Council of Better Business Bureaus (NAD) condemned advertising of the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) touting the environmental benefits of nuclear power. I agree that some of the broad and unqualified environmental claims made in those ads are inaccurate or misleading.

The NEI's response to the decision, that you "intend to take NAD's concerns regarding potential misconceptions that our advertising might create into consideration in future advertising campaigns," was itself somewhat vague. A December 10, 1998 New York Times article by Matthew Wald reported that an NEI spokesman said the NEI "had not explicitly promised to change the campaign." I urge you to assure that any future ads sponsored by the NEI will be modified to reflect NAD's recommendations and will make only clearly truthful claims. Indeed, claims in the ads about cost and reliability, which were not addressed by the NAD, also are disputable and should be reconsidered. In the emerging competitive electricity market, consumer choices will no doubt be strongly influenced by information conveyed through advertising, particularly claims about cost and environmental effects. It is therefore vital that the information consumers receive is accurate and clear.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress